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Rudi Matthee



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- 1 This book won a prize of Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic guidance as one of the best studies on Iran published in 2001, and for a good reason: it is an excellent analysis of the history of the Iranian side of the Persian Gulf between the 5th century AH and Shah 'Abbas's conquest of Hormuz in 1622. The author, a native of Lar, brings a particular sensibility to the Garmsir to his study, in addition to basing his study on a plethora of Persian and Arabic sources, some of them unpublished manuscripts, as well as on a good selection of Western-language material. The latter includes primary sources, though neither works in Portuguese nor even the published parts of the English East Indian Company records for the early 17th century are included. The secondary sources employed are a bit dated and thus show some important lacunae, among them Ronald Ferrier's writings on the English involvement in early 17th century Iran and, most regrettably, Jean Aubin's post-1971 studies on Hormuz and the Persian Gulf.
- 2 Following a useful historiographical introduction, the first historical chapter suggests that the independent dynasty of the rulers of Hormuz may have emerged as early as the 5th century AH. Subsequent chapters discuss the rise and fall of the various commercial emporia, such as Siraf, but Hormuz and its fate remains the focus of the study. One chapter analyzes of the causes of its decline, in which the author surely attributes too much to the involvement of the Portuguese as of the early 16th century and not enough to the internal strife that plagued the local rulers at the time of the rise of the Salghurids. The last part of the book is devoted to Shah 'Abbas I's involvement with the Persian Gulf littoral, and offers a detailed discussion of the incorporation of Lar, the conquest of

Bahrain and the ouster of the Portuguese from Hormuz, the latter event largely based on the *Jarun-nāmeḥ*, which the author is currently preparing for publication.

- 3 The book pays scant attention to the fact that most of the local Persian Gulf dynasties were Arab, and the author's implied message that when Shah 'Abbas established control over the coastal area and Hormuz he (consciously) reasserted Iran's right to sovereignty over these territories is plainly anachronistic or at least does not follow a discussion of motivations behind Safavid policies vis-à-vis the Garmsir. Similarly, the presumption of a coherent trade policy on the part of the same ruler causes the author to express surprise at the fact that he razed Hormuz to the ground instead of launching the port as his own emporium after taking it from the Portuguese.
- 4 Even without an index, this book is a solid and welcome contribution to the history of the Persian Gulf.

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Thèmes : 4.2.1. Safavides et Qājārs

nompropre Safavides, Golf persique

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